

FORM PTO-1390
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER

TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES
DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US)
CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371

Micronas.5963

U.S. APPLICATION NO. 09/743926 37 CFR 1.5

09/743926

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO.
PCT/EP99/05052INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE
15 July 1999PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED
16 July 1998

TITLE OF INVENTION

INTEGRATED CIRCUIT WITH A SENSOR ELEMENT

APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US

Lothar Blossfeld, Ralf Janke

Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:

1. ☒ This is a **FIRST** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.
2. ☐ This is a **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.
3. ☒ This is an express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f)). The submission must include items (5), (6), (9) and (21) indicated below.
4. ☒ The US has been elected by the expiration of 19 months from the priority date (Article 31).
5. ☒ A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2))
 - a. ☐ is attached hereto (required only if not communicated by the International Bureau).
 - b. ☒ has been communicated by the International Bureau.
 - c. ☐ is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US).
6. ☒ An English language translation of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)).
 - a. ☒ is attached hereto.
 - b. ☐ has been previously submitted under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4).
7. ☐ Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3))
 - a. ☐ are attached hereto (required only if not communicated by the International Bureau).
 - b. ☐ have been communicated by the International Bureau.
 - c. ☐ have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired.
 - d. ☐ have not been made and will not be made.
8. ☐ An English language translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371 (c)(3)).
9. ☐ An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)).
10. ☒ An English language translation of the annexes of the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(5)).

Items 11 to 20 below concern document(s) or information included:

11. ☒ An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98.
12. ☐ An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included.
13. ☒ A **FIRST** preliminary amendment.
14. ☐ A **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** preliminary amendment.
15. ☐ A substitute specification.
16. ☐ A change of power of attorney and/or address letter.
17. ☐ A computer-readable form of the sequence listing in accordance with PCT Rule 13ter.2 and 35 U.S.C. 1.821 - 1.825.
18. ☐ A second copy of the published international application under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4).
19. ☐ A second copy of the English language translation of the international application under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4).
20. ☒ Other items or information:
 - Proposed Drawing Amendment
 - WO Publication No. 00/04640

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|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| U.S. APPLICATION NO. 09/743926 <small>(If known, see 37 CFR 1.55)</small> | | INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/EP99/05052 | | ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER Micronas.5963 | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|------------------|----------------------------------|----|
| 21. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The following fees are submitted: BASIC NATIONAL FEE (37 CFR 1.492 (a) (1) - (5)): Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) nor international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO and International Search Report not prepared by the EPO or JPO \$1000.00 International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but International Search Report prepared by the EPO or JPO \$860.00 International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO \$710.00 International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) paid to USPTO but all claims did not satisfy provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) \$690.00 International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) paid to USPTO and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) \$100.00 ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT = | | | | CALCULATIONS PTO USE ONLY | |
| | | | | \$ 860.00 | |
| Surcharge of \$130.00 for furnishing the oath or declaration later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(e)). | | | | \$ 130.00 | |
| CLAIMS | NUMBER FILED | NUMBER EXTRA | RATE | | |
| Total claims | 13 - 20 = | | x \$18.00 | \$ 0 | |
| Independent claims | 3 - 3 = | | x \$80.00 | \$ 0 | |
| MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM(S) (if applicable) | | | | + \$270.00 | |
| TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS = | | | | \$ 990.00 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant claims small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27. The fees indicated above are reduced by 1/2. | | | | + | |
| SUBTOTAL = | | | | \$ 990.00 | |
| Processing fee of \$130.00 for furnishing the English translation later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)). | | | | \$ | |
| TOTAL NATIONAL FEE = | | | | \$ 990.00 | |
| Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31). \$40.00 per property + | | | | \$ | |
| TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED = | | | | \$ 990.00 | |
| | | | | Amount to be refunded: | \$ |
| | | | | charged: | \$ |

a. ☒ A check in the amount of \$ 990.00 to cover the above fees is enclosed.


b. ☐ Please charge my Deposit Account No. _____ in the amount of \$ _____ to cover the above fees.
 A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

c. ☒ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any
 overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0079. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

d. ☐ Fees are to be charged to a credit card. **WARNING:** Information on this form may become public. **Credit card
 information should not be included on this form.** Provide credit card information and authorization on PTO-2038.

**NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR
 1.137 (a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.**

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09/743926

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANT: Blossfeld et al.

GROUP: Not yet assigned

**INTERNATIONAL
APPLN. NO.:** PCT/EP99/05052

EXAMINER: Not yet assigned

SERIAL NO: Not yet assigned

**INTERNATIONAL
FILING DATE:** July 15, 1999

FOR: INTEGRATED CIRCUIT WITH A SENSOR ELEMENT

FIRST PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Preliminary to calculation of the filing fee, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-7.

Please add claims 8-20 as follows:

--8. An integrated circuit sensor, comprising:

a comparator that receives an input signal, and compares said input signal against a plurality of predetermined threshold values and provides a plurality of comparator output signals each indicative of whether or not said input signal exceeds an associated one of said plurality of predetermined threshold values; and

an output stage that receives said plurality of comparator output signals and encodes state

information associated with said plurality of comparator output signals to provide on a integrated circuit lead an encoded output signal indicative of said state information associated with said plurality of comparator signals.--

--9. The integrated circuit sensor of claim 8, wherein said output stage comprises means for generating said encoded output signal using pulse width modulation, wherein said state information is encoded within said encoded output signal based upon the pulse/pause ration of said encoded output signal.--

--10. The integrated circuit sensor of claim 8, comprising:
a magnetic field transducer that generates and provides said input signal.--

--11. The integrated circuit sensor of claim 10, wherein said magnetic field transducer comprises a Hall effect transducer.--

--12. The integrated circuit sensor of claim 11, comprising a control unit that includes a memory device that stores and provides said plurality of predetermined threshold values.--

--13. The integrated circuit sensor of claim 12, wherein said memory device comprises a read/write memory device that allows said plurality of predetermined threshold values.--

--14. The integrated circuit sensor of claim 12, comprising
means for reading updated predetermined threshold values that are input to said integrated

circuit sensor through said bi-directional integrated circuit lead that also receives said encoded output signal, and for storing said updated predetermined threshold values in said memory device, which provides said updated predetermined threshold values to said comparator for comparison against said input signal.--

--15. The integrated circuit sensor of claim 12, wherein said an output stage receives said plurality of comparator output signals and encodes state information associated with said plurality of comparator output signals to provide an encoded output signal indicative of said state information associated with said plurality of comparator signals.--

--16. An integrated circuit sensor, comprising:

a transducer element that provides a transducer output signal;

a comparator that receives said transducer output signal, and compares a signal indicative of said transducer output signal against a plurality of adjustable threshold values and provides a plurality of comparator output signals each indicative of one of an associated plurality of switching states; and

an output stage that receives said plurality of comparator output signals and encodes switching state information associated with said plurality of comparator output signals to provide on a bi-directional integrated circuit lead an encoded output signal indicative of said state information associated with said plurality of comparator signals.--

--17. The integrated circuit sensor of claim 16, wherein said output stage comprises means for generating said encoded output signal using pulse width modulation, wherein said state information

is encoded within said encoded output signal based upon the pulse/pause ration of said encoded output signal.--

--18. The integrated circuit sensor of claim 16, wherein said transducer element comprises a magnetic field transducer that generates and provides said transducer output signal.--

--19. The integrated circuit sensor of claim 16, wherein said comparator comprises hysteresis on each predetermined threshold values.--

--20. An integrated circuit sensor, comprising:

a transducer element that provides a transducer output signal;

an amplifier that receives said transducer output signal and provides an amplified transducer output signal;

a comparator network that receives said amplified transducer output signal, and compares a signal indicative of said amplified transducer output signal against a plurality of adjustable threshold values to determine a state of said amplified transducer output signal, and provides a plurality of comparator output signals indicative of said state of said amplified transducer output signal; and

an output stage that receives said plurality of comparator output signals and encodes switching state information associated with said plurality of comparator output signals to provide on a integrated circuit lead an encoded output signal indicative of said state.--

REMARKS

This preliminary amendment is being filed to add the claims 8-20. Claims 1-7 have been cancelled. Claims 8-20 remain.

Examination on the merits is respectfully requested.

If a telephone interview could assist in the prosecution of this application, please call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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INTEGRATED CIRCUIT WITH A SENSOR ELEMENT

The invention relates to an integrated circuit arrangement with a sensor element.

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Integrated circuit arrangements with sensor elements, e.g. with magnetic sensors, are known, which detect mechanical switching states in a large number of consumer and automotive applications. They detect a mechanical switching state by means of a variable magnetic field, which represents the changed position on the basis of a variable distance between the magnetic field sensor and a movable magnet. The physical variable of magnetic field strength is thus used as a measure for determining the switching state. If the magnet approaches the transducer, which converts the magnetic field strength into an analog electrical signal, the switching state "turned on" is represented at the output of the sensor circuit when the distance becomes less than a certain distance A1. If the distance becomes less than a further distance A2, the output signal represents "turned off". This clearly shows that this sensor circuit can exactly represent a switching state as either "turned on" or "turned off". If significantly differentiated, more manifold switching states are to be represented, it is necessary to use a cascade of such sensor circuits, which requires very complex total circuits, which are very bulky and costly. In addition, such total circuits prove to be highly trouble-prone. Furthermore, such total circuits have a high EMC risk, which is a great disadvantage in the automotive field.

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It is the object of the invention to create an integrated circuit arrangement with a sensor that can represent differentiated switching states, that is more than just one "turned on" or "turned off" switching state, and thus overcomes the above-mentioned disadvantages as completely as possible.

5

The invention accomplishes this object by a sensor arrangement with the characteristics of Claim 1.

Advantageous developments are found in the subclaims.

10

The inventive circuit arrangement, which can represent more switching states than only "turned on" or "turned off", comprises a control unit to control the sensor circuit, and an input to which an analog electrical signal is conducted.

15

This signal corresponds to an analog physical variable, such as pressure, force, acceleration, magnetic field strength, electromagnetic field strength, temperature, light intensity, or the like. This electrical input signal is compared with several thresholds in an analytical unit or a comparator unit. If the value of the signal falls above or below these individual thresholds, an output signal is generated which can represent a number of

20 different switching states, which extend beyond the single switching state of "turned on" or "turned off". This output signal is conducted from the analytical unit or comparator unit to

the output stage and is made available to the environment of the sensor circuit for further use.

The invention thus succeeds in representing various differentiated switching
5 positions by means of a single sensor circuit, which comprises a single control unit, a
single analytical unit, a single output stage, and a single input, and which is especially
simple, compact, and reliable. For example, this can be used in connection with the
contact-free picking off of the many positions of the wiper lever in an automobile by means
of Hall sensors and an appropriate, series-connected, inventive sensor circuit. The many
10 various positions of the wiper lever, such as, for example, "off", "on slow", "on fast", "on
very fast", or "timed operation", are converted by such an arrangement with the inventive
sensor circuit into an electrical output signal, which can uniquely and discretely represent
these many switching states. According to the invention, a cascade arrangement of several
sensor circuits, as is the case in the prior art, can be dispensed with. This is associated
15 with a considerable reduction of costs, of the space needed for the circuits, of the
complexity of the circuit and wiring, with a marked reduction of trouble-proneness, as a
result of the reduction in the number of components, and with an improvement as regards
EMC sensitivity, due to the reduction of EMC-sensitive components and EMC-generating
components. The inventive sensor arrangement is thus best suited for the automotive field,
20 which precisely has special requirements for EMC compatibility and compact
arrangements.

In addition, this sensor circuit proves to be a very universal sensor circuit, since it can interact with the most various transducers for converting various analog physical variables into analog electrical signals. In this case, the analog electrical signal only needs
5 to be amplified to a certain amplitude range by an appropriate signal amplifier, and then conducted to the input and matched to the thresholds, as appropriate.

According to a preferred design of the invention, the transducer for converting the analog physical variable into an analog electrical input signal is connected to the single
10 input, and thus is integrated into the sensor circuit. This makes it possible to adapt the transducer and sensor optimally to the remaining sensor circuit, and thus to create a closed and standardized sensor circuit, which no longer requires any specific adjustment by the user. This eliminates a great deal of trouble associated with such a standardized circuit with a transducer, especially if the user, when adapting the output signal of the transducer
15 to the remaining circuit, does not correctly take into account the relationships with the threshold values. This regularly results in considerable problems regarding the unambiguous nature of the output signal and thus regarding the representation of the plurality of discrete circuit states. Furthermore, it is now possible to design the standardized sensor circuit with a transducer especially optimized as regards space and
20 EMC, since the interactions of the transducer with the remaining sensor circuit can already be taken into account in the design.

The sensor circuit preferably has an output stage with a single output. At this output, the plurality of discrete circuit states is represented, for example, by the pulse/pause ratio of the output signal or by a digital signal, which is not necessarily binary coded, or by an analog signal, which has a number of signal steps, corresponding to the plurality of switching states. For example, if five switching states are to be represented, the pulse/pause ratio can vary between 5/1, 4/2, 3/3, 2/4, and 1/5. Besides these examples, one can also conceive of other ways of representing the plurality of switching states with a single output. The design of the sensor circuit with a single output constitutes a sensor circuit which is especially cost-optimized, since a plurality of parallel outputs need no longer be made available.

In another design of the sensor circuit, the output stage has the same number of outputs as the number of different discrete switching states that must be represented. This increased number of outputs, which correlate with the various switching states, makes it possible to turn various devices on or off simultaneously and independently, corresponding to the plurality of various switching states. In this case, each output has associated with it a corresponding device. A typical application of such a sensor circuit is its use with a multi-function switch, which can turn various devices on or off individually or jointly, depending on the position of the switch lever. Another typical application of such a sensor circuit is in combination with a brightness sensor, which, with increasing darkness,

selectively turns on more and more light sources, so as always to assure sufficient illumination in an interior room. The individual light sources are here always activated selectively by their own circuit output.

5 Besides the two extremes of a single output and the same number of outputs as there are switching states, it is also possible for the number of outputs to lie between these extremes. This represents a compromise between the most economical sensor circuit with a single output and the technically optimized sensor circuit with many outputs, each of which is always actuated selectively.

10 According to a preferred design, the thresholds are made adjustable. The circuit can thus be adapted to the particular external circumstances for forming the output signal, as a function of the electrical input signal, without creating a new, corresponding sensor circuit. It is thus possible to adapt the circuit arrangement to possible time changes, such as aging effects, especially in the transducer associated with the circuit arrangement.
15 Production tolerances or changes due to various use conditions, for example due to temperature effects and the like, can thus be taken into account very simply and economically. This considerably expands the field of application of the sensor circuit, by further increasing its functionality, without requiring complex or expensive external
20 circuits to adapt the output signal or the input signal. This results in a very simple and

reliable sensor circuit, which is especially characterized by a very economical and flexible design.

An especially preferred design of the sensor circuit makes it possible for the user
5 to set the thresholds himself. This can be done in a special learning mode of the sensor
circuit, in which the desired switching ranges of the sensor circuit are approached, and the
analytical unit, in collaboration with the control unit, determines the necessary parameters
of the threshold values, and stores them in an appropriate memory, which in particular is
designed as a non-volatile memory. This results in an especially flexible and very
10 universally applicable sensor circuit, which allows the user a very large and manifold field
of application.

The thresholds preferably are combined into threshold pairs, which specify a range
of values with which a certain discrete switching state is associated. These threshold pairs
15 preferably are closely spaced, so that the range in between, which does not necessarily
have a particular switching state associated with it, is kept very narrow. In this way, the
sensor circuit generates clear and defined switching states over nearly the entire
measurement range of the analog physical variable. The choice of threshold pairs makes it
possible, in a simple way, to characterize uniquely and very reliably circuit switching
20 states, and thus to design a very reliable sensor circuit.

The sensor circuit with the threshold pairs preferably is designed so that a hysteresis exists between the individual threshold pairs. This assures that a defined switching state exists in the preferably narrow range between the individual threshold pairs. If there are frequent small fluctuations about a threshold, this assures that the sensor circuit will not constantly switch back and forth between the individual switching states, which would be undesirable. This assures that the system will assume certain switching states very reliably and persistently.

The sensor circuit preferably is designed such that it ignores brief changes of the input signal and does not consider these for changing the switching signal. Such a design does not indeed prevent short-term noise signals, which can occur again and again in an electronic circuit, whether due to electromagnetic radiation from the outside or due to switching interferences, but it does prevent their negative effects. This can be achieved by integrating or averaging elements at the input. This makes the sensor circuit especially insensitive to noise.

The sensor circuit preferably is designed as an integrated circuit, which is especially advantageous as regards EMC compatibility and small size. In particular, a sensor circuit with an integrated transducer in the form of an integrated circuit proves to be a complete sensor circuit, which requires very few pins, and thus also is very economical and not very trouble-prone. Furthermore, such a complete sensor circuit proves to be extremely small.

Its predestined application thus is in the automotive field, since tight spatial circumstances and special requirements for EMC compatibility prevail there.

A preferred embodiment of the invention is shown in Figure 1 in the form of a
5 block circuit diagram, and will be described in more detail below.

The sensor circuit shown here has a transducer 1, which converts an analog physical variable, for example a temperature or a magnetic field strength or a pressure, into an electrical signal, and conducts this signal to an amplifier 2, whose amplified
10 electrical signal is conducted to the input 6 of the analytical unit 4. The analytical unit 4 has a comparator arrangement, whose comparator thresholds can be adjusted by means of a control unit 3, which is connected to the analytical unit 4. The parameters for the thresholds of the comparators in the analytical unit 4 are stored in a memory (not shown) in the control unit 3, and are used to control the comparator thresholds.

15

The input signal at input 6 is conducted to the comparators in the analytical unit 4. Depending on the relationship of the input signal to the respective comparator thresholds, the analytical unit generates an appropriate output signal from the comparators and conducts this to the output stage 5. The latter transforms the signals of the analytical unit 4
20 into an output signal, which is distributed among the four outputs 7a, 7b, 7c, and 7d. Because there are different outputs 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d from the output stage 5, it is possible to

actuate directly four different devices or also groups of devices, connected to the outputs 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d, selectively and independently of one another. It is thus clear that, depending on the magnitude of an analog physical variable, several devices can be turned on or off by the sensor circuit, independently of one another and without complicated additional decoder circuits.

Figure 2 shows a switching process by way of example. Figure 2 shows the time progress of an analog measurement variable, in an arbitrary unit, as a solid line. This analog measurement variable falls from the value 1 to its lowest point just below 0.4, and then again rises to a value of about 1. Three pairs of thresholds are shown, namely A11, A21; A12, A22; A13 and A23, such that:

$$A11 < A21 < A12 < A22 < A13 < A23$$

The circuit diagram shows the progress of the output signal, which is shown as a dashed line. The output signal shows three different, discrete switching states, the switching state 1, 2, and 3. If the analog measurement variable lies within the interval A11 to A21, the diagram shows the switching state 1. If the analog measurement variable lies in the threshold interval between A12 and A22, the output signal assumes the switching state 2. If the analog measurement variable lies within the threshold interval A13 to A23, it assumes the switching state 3.

Furthermore, the diagram shows that a hysteresis exists between the threshold intervals formed through the threshold pairs. This assures that, when the analog measurement variable falls from an analog value within the interval A13 to A23 to below the limit A13, the measurement state is retained, until the upper limit of the next threshold interval A12, A22 is reached. Only when the analog measurement variable falls to the threshold A22, does the signal change from the switching state 3 to the switching state 2. The like applies to a further drop to the threshold A21, where the signal then changes from switching state 2 to switching state 1. The like also applies to a rise of the analog measurement variable, where the original switching state is retained until the lower limit of the next threshold interval is reached. This means that, when the analog measurement variable rises from a value 0.4, corresponding to the threshold A11, across the threshold A21 until it reaches the lower threshold A12, the switching state 1 is retained, even though the threshold interval A11 to A21, corresponding to the actual switching state 1, has been left behind. Upon reaching the threshold A12, the signal assumes the switching state 2, and this is retained during a further rise of the analog measurement variable, until this reaches the threshold A13. Then there is a transition from the switching state 2 to the switching state 3.

This structure of the thresholds as three threshold pairs, which are respectively connected to one another through a hysteresis region, makes it possible to represent very

reliably three discrete switching states as a function of a varying analog measurement variable. The presence of hysteresis regions in particular assures a definite switch between the individual switching states and thereby prevents undesirable frequent switching when there are fluctuations about a threshold. This makes the sensor circuit into an especially
5 reliable and readily handled circuit arrangement, which can uniquely represent a plurality of discrete switching states.

Figure 3 shows a similar circuit arrangement as Figure 1. However, the circuit now has a single output terminal 7a, from which the various switching states of the electrical signal
10 can be picked off in coded form. This single output terminal 7a can also be used as the input terminal for adjusting the thresholds.

Claims

1. The invention relates to an integrated circuit with a single sensor element (1) for converting a physical variable into an electrical signal, comprising a comparator unit (4) by which means the electrical signal of the sensor element (1) can be compared with various different threshold values in order to produce different discreet circuit states and an output unit (5) for outputting an output signal representing the different discreet circuit states of the comparator unit (4), characterized in that the threshold values of the comparator unit (4) are stored in a storage unit of the integrated circuit in such a way that they can be regulated with a control device (3), and that the integrated circuit has a single output terminal (7a) from which the various circuit states of the electrical signal can be picked off in code.
2. The integrated circuit arrangement of Claim 1, characterized in that it has a transducer (1) to convert the analog physical variable into an analog electrical input signal, which is connected to the input (6).
3. The integrated circuit arrangement of Claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the output terminal (7a) also serves as the input terminal for the control device (3).

4. The integrated circuit arrangement of one of the Claims 1 to 3, characterized in that the adjustable threshold can be adjusted by the user of the sensor circuit.
5. The integrated circuit arrangement of one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the thresholds are assembled into threshold pairs, each of which is associated with a switching state.
6. The integrated circuit arrangement of Claim 5, characterized in that the analytical unit (4) is controlled by the control unit (3) in such a way that a hysteresis exists between the individual threshold pairs.
7. The integrated circuit arrangement of one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the analytical unit (4) is designed so that short-term changes of the input signal do not result in a change of the switching signal.

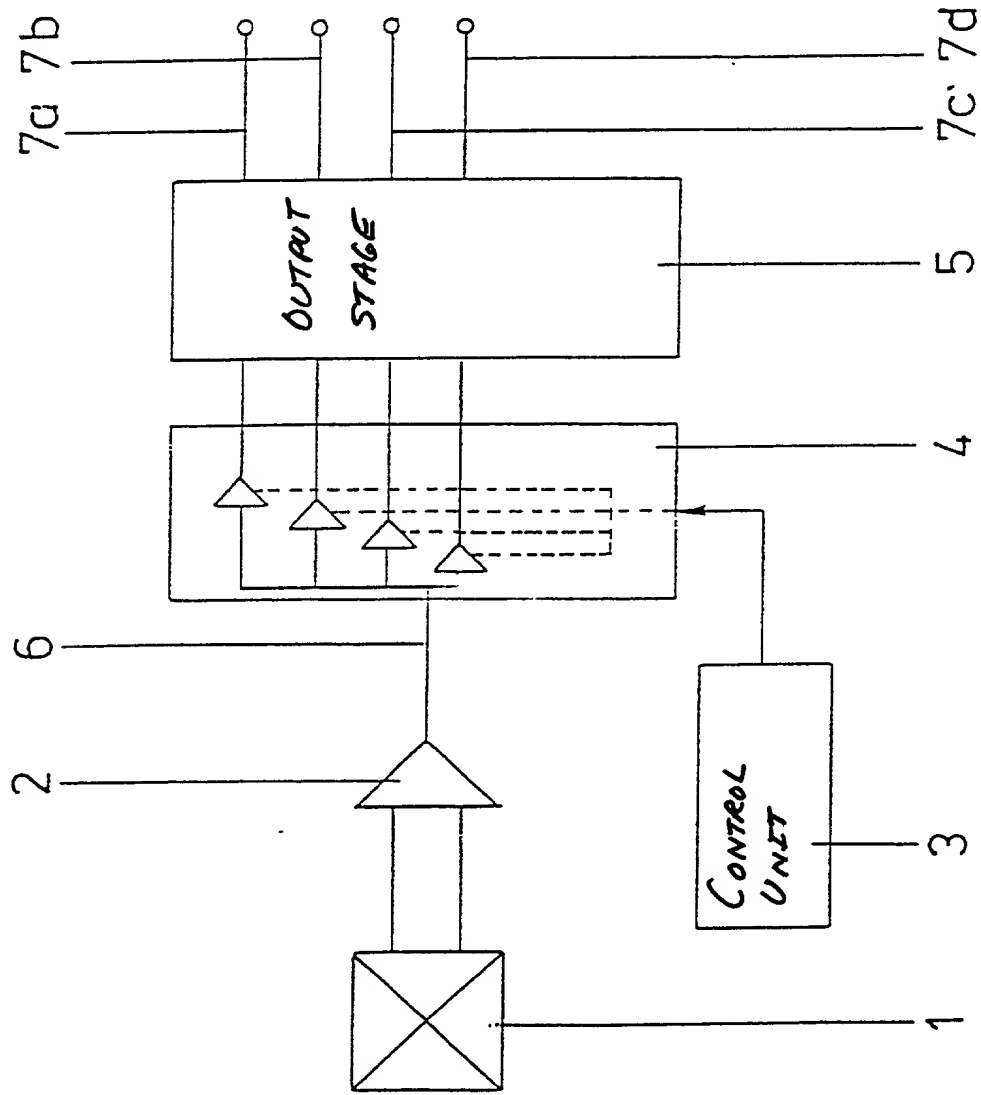
Sensorschaltung

FIG 1

FIG 2

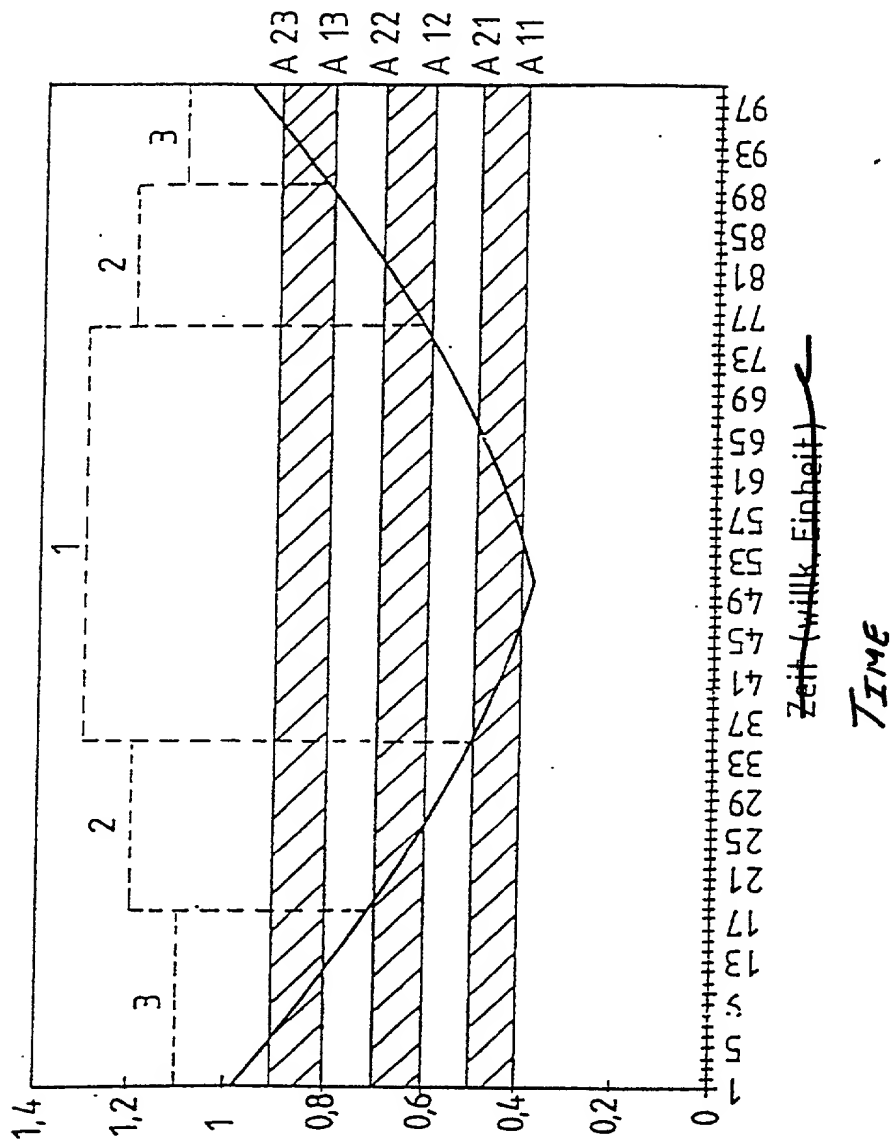
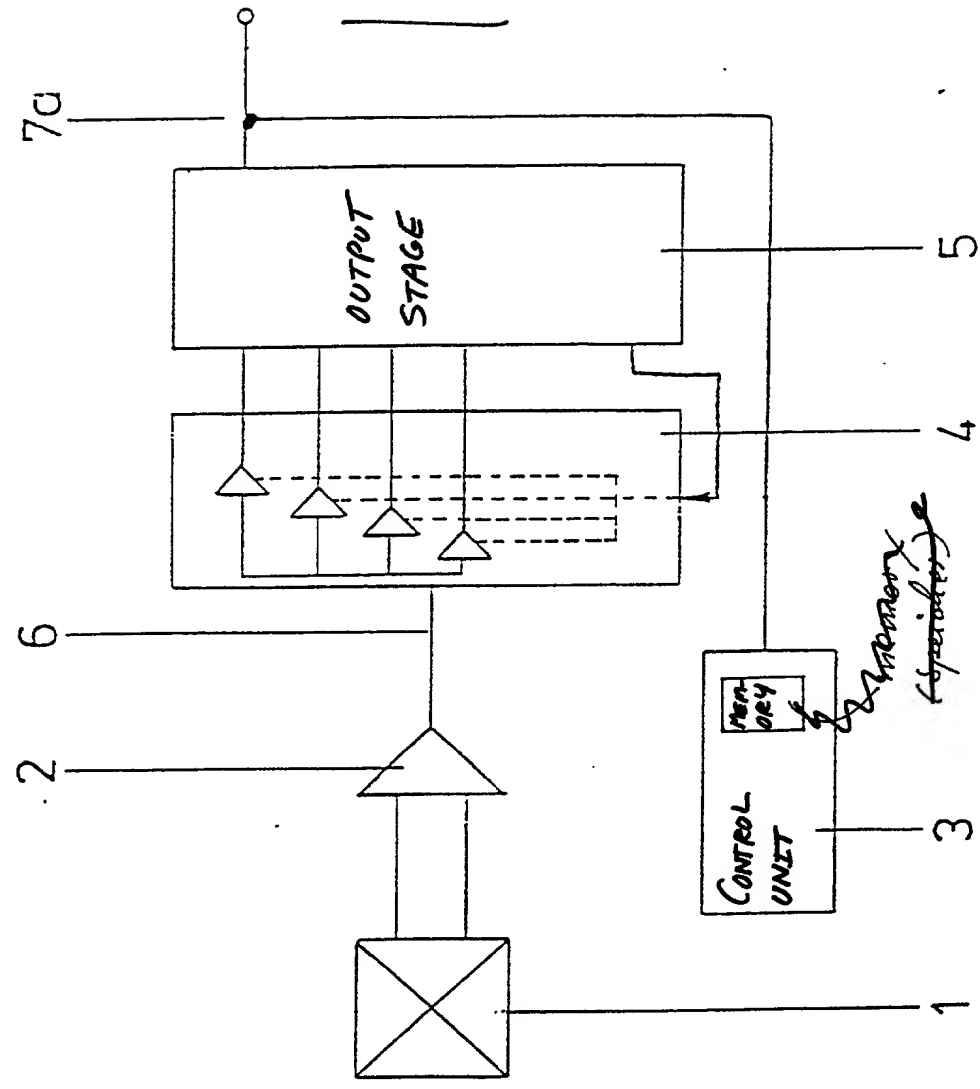


FIG 3

Sensorschaltung



DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

We, the below named inventors, hereby declare that:

Our residences, post office addresses, and citizenships are as stated below next to our respective names.

We believe we are the original, first, and joint inventors of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled **INTEGRATED CIRCUIT WITH A SENSOR ELEMENT**, the specification of which was filed with the United States Patent and Trademark Office on January 16, 2001 and designated serial number 09/743,926.

We hereby state that we have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims.

We acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

We hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code §119(a)-(d) or §365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate filed by us on the same subject matter having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed: International Application No. PCT/EP99/05052 filed July 15, 1999 and having an earliest priority date of July 16, 1998.

We hereby declare that all statements are made hereby of our own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

And we hereby appoint:

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Maurice E. Gauthier | - | Reg. No. <u>20,798</u> |
| Richard L. Stevens | - | Reg. No. <u>24,445</u> |
| Matthew E. Connors | - | Reg. No. <u>33,298</u> |
| William E. Hilton | - | Reg. No. <u>35,192</u> |
| Patrick J. O'Shea | - | Reg. No. <u>35,305</u> |
| Arlene J. Powers | - | Reg. No. <u>35,985</u> |
| Steven M. Mills | - | Reg. No. <u>36,610</u> |
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all of the firm of Samuels, Gauthier & Stevens, our attorneys with full power of substitution and revocation, to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

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